

Message Text

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21

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 DODE-00 /043 W

----- 095283

R 190420Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1103

INFO: RUEHBAC/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1193

CINCPAC

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: SOCI, PP

SUBJECT: LAW AND ORDER IN THE FIRST THREE MONTHS OF PNG

INDEPENDENCE

1. PREDICTIONS THAT THERE WOULD BE A BREAKDOWN IN LAW AND ORDER AND AN UPSURGE OF TRIBAL VIOLENCE IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING INDEPENDENCE HAVE NOT PROVED TRUE DURING THE THREE MONTHS THAT HAVE ELAPSED SINCE THE AUSTRALIANS TURNED OVER FULL RESPONSIBILITY TO THE GPNG ON SEPTEMBER 16.

2. THE TREND IN URBAN CRIME HAS SHOWN AN INCREASE IN RECENT YEARS, AND THIS UPWARD TREND IS CONTINUING SINCE INDEPENDENCE BUT NOT AT AN ACCELERATED RATE. IN OCTOBER-DECEMBER 1974, REPORTED CRIMES IN ALL CATEGORIES IN PORT MORESBY NUMBERED 1592; IN OCTOBER-DECEMBER 1975 (LAST TWO WEEKS ESTIMATED) THE FIGURE WAS 1712.

3. TRIBAL VIOLENCE HAS CONTINUED IN THE HIGHLANDS. THERE HAS BEEN NO BREAKDOWN IN THE SECURITY SITUATION IN THE HIGHLANDS, BUT NEITHER HAS THERE BEEN A CESSATION OF CLAN

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STRIFE. DATA ARE NOT AVAILABLE TO MAKE PRECISE COMPARISONS

WITH THE PAST BUT OUR IMPRESSION IS THAT HIGHLANDS FIGHTING HAS CONTINUED AT ABOUT THE SAME LEVEL AS EARLIER IN THE YEAR.

4. STRIKES AND DEMONSTRATIONS HAVE CONTINUED TO OCCUR ONLY INFREQUENTLY SINCE INDEPENDENCE. THERE HAS BEEN ONE PEACEFUL RALLY OF PUBLIC SERVANTS IN PROTEST OVER THE DROP IN WAGE INDEXATION AND ONE SMALL RALLY OVER THE SITUATION IN EAST TIMOR SINCE INDEPENDENCE, IN ADDITION TO PROTESTS IN BOUGAINVILLE (SEE BELOW).

5. ONE OF THE TWO SECESSIONIST MOVEMENTS (PAPUA BESENA) HAS BEEN SILENT AND SEEMINGLY INACTIVE SINCE INDEPENDENCE. THE SITUATION HAS WORSENED WITH REGARD TO THE OTHER SECESSIONIST MOVEMENT (BOUGAINVILLE) BUT THIS, TOO, IS THE CONTINUATION OF A TREND THAT BEGAN BEFORE INDEPENDENCE. DEMONSTRATIONS OCCURRED IN BOUGAINVILLE IN OCTOBER IN PROTEST OVER THE SUSPENSION OF THE BOUGAINVILLE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT BY THE GPNG, AND RIOT POLICE HAD TO BE FLOWN IN. ATTEMPTS OF THE BOUGAINVILLEANS TO TAKE OVER PATROL POSTS WERE THWARTED BY THE GPNG., BUT SOME VIOLENCE OCCURRED. THE BOUGAINVILLE SECESSIONIST MOVEMENT IS POTENTIALLY THE MOST SERIOUS THREAT TO THE SECURITY OF PNG, HOWEVER, AS THE SECESSIONISTS HAVE THE ORGANIZATION, FOLLOWING, AND OVERALL CAPABILITY TO INITIATE A CLASH WHICH COULD FORCE THE GPNG TO ATTEMPT TO QUELL THE DISSIDENTS BY VIOLENCE.

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